

REMARKS

1. Claims 1-33 and 36-38 were pending. Claims 1, 4, 6, 8-10, 14, 17, 20, 28-32 and 36-38 have been amended. Claims 7 and 18 have been canceled. No new claims have been added. Thus, claims 1-6, 8-17, 19-33 and 36-38 remain pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

2. The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 8-17, 19-33 and 36-38 but indicated that claims 7 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants have decided at this time to amend the claims to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Rather than amending claims 7 and 18 into independent form, though, Applicants have amended base claims 1 and 14 to respectively include the limitations of claims 7 and 18 and have canceled claims 7 and 18. Among other things, this amendment preserves the ordering of claims and the claim dependencies. The following is a brief explanation of the claim amendments:

Claim 1 is amended to include the limitation of claim 7 and so amended claim 1 and its dependent claims should now be in allowable form. Claims 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 28, which depend from claim 1, are amended to comport with amended claim 1 (e.g., to provide proper antecedent basis for certain claim terms).

Claim 14 is amended to include the limitation of claim 18 and so amended claim 14 and its dependent claims should now be in allowable form. Claims 17 and 20, which depend from claim 14, are amended to comport with amended claim 14 (e.g., to provide proper antecedent basis for certain claim terms).

Independent claims 29, 30, 32, 36, and 38 are amended in a manner similar to claim 1 to include the limitation of claim 7 and so these claims should now be in allowable form.

Independent claims 31 and 37 are amended in a manner similar to claim 14 to include the limitation of claim 18 and so these claims should now be in allowable form.

3. All pending claims are believed to be in a form suitable for allowance. Therefore, the application is believed to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicants respectfully request early allowance of the application. The Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned if it will assist further examination of this application.

4. Applicant does not believe any extension of time is required for timely consideration of this response. In the event that an extension has been overlooked, this conditional petition of extension is hereby submitted. Applicant requests that deposit account number 19-4972 be charged for any fees that may be required for the timely consideration of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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